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Harvard and CIA still at odds

Bok goes to Senate unit in dispute over secrecy issue

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Harvard University's running dispute with the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) about whether the CIA can secretly recruit on campus and carry out other covert activities has turned a bit more contentious.

Last week in Washington, Derek C. Bok, Harvard president, released to the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence correspondence he had with CIA director Stansfield Turner on the subject. Dr. Bok told the committee that the agency is saying it will ignore a university ban on covert recruitment on campus, as well as other guidelines the university has put into effect on an interim basis.

Dr. Bok said in an interview that "such operations by the CIA discredit the academic profession as a whole and harm this institution." He also said his legal counsel, Daniel Steiner, has "talked at length with the CIA officials about this," that there is "no enmity between the two institutions," and that he advised the CIA in advance that he was going to release the correspondence.

A CIA spokesman said: "This is a basic problem between two institutions that have overlapping interests, and Congress will have to settle the question. As of now there is no law against our functioning on campus and most of our activities on campus are overt. It is important that the Church Committee [the select committee to study intelligence operations, headed by Sen. Frank Church (D) of Idaho, predecessor to the present panel, chaired by Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D) of Hawaii] did not recommend outlawing the covert activities."

The Senate committee is working on a bill (S2525) revising the federal law governing intelligence activities.

Guidelines drawn up

After the Church committee reported in April, 1976, Harvard appointed a committee to draw up guidelines to govern relationships between the university community and the CIA and other U.S. intelligence agencies. These guidelines were put into effect in May, 1977.

Harvard thus became the first academic institution in the U.S. to issue guidelines in this area. The Church committee

had released information indicating the extent to which the CIA was involved in such covert activities.

President Bok says that "at least 50 universities are now actively at work in this area." He says there is a consensus that the CIA should be banned from undisclosed activities on campus.

'Secrecy' challenged

Morton S. Baratz, general secretary of the American Association of University Professors in Washington, also testified before the committee last week. Both Dr. Baratz and Dr. Bok said that they are not asking that the substance of the CIA work be disclosed. They are only asking that when the CIA works with a professor the university where he or she teaches be informed of the relationship and the professor not recruited secretly for the CIA.

They are also strongly opposed to the CIA practice of using professors abroad to report information to the agency. They say this discredits the academic world in general and hinders freedom of inquiry in many ways.

Dr. Bok said that Harvard may enter into research contracts with intelligence agencies as long as the existence of a contract is made public. And he said that when a professor does work for an intelligence agency, it is not necessary to make this fact public, as long as the dean of the department is aware of it. Harvard does not want secret recruiting, covert intelligence operations, or the obtaining of the unwitting services of one member of the Harvard community by another member.

Harvard is especially concerned, said president Bok, that its professors not observe or report to the CIA on foreign students, of which there are more and more at U.S. academic institutions.